

## The Future of Language Education

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### **Abstract**

The shift from in-person to online learning was undoubtedly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic officially ended over a year ago, online or blended language courses have become the new normal. Today, both educators and learners are supported by numerous online resources which can be used either in class or for self-study. These could be divided into a few categories: meeting platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Whereby or even WhatsApp; websites which provide ready-to-use lesson plans, e.g. LinguaHouse, Teach This, ESL Brains, ISL Collective, Breaking News English to name but a few and, naturally, a plethora of authentic materials that can be adjusted by learners and educators to suit one's aims, for instance: BBC One-minute World News, 60 Second Docs or Ted Talks. Many of those resources accommodate other modern languages as well. One should not forget about those tools that can be used as a collaborative space by both teachers and students such as Google Docs, Quizlet, Duolingo, Babel and many, many more.

It is the presenter's contention that online learning has democratised language learning not only because many of the above-mentioned resources are free of charge. Educators and learners can also connect via platforms such as Preply, bypassing costly language course providers.

Meetup, on the other hand, takes a step further in the direction of learner autonomy. It connects language learners either in-person or online, enables users to practise and improve their skills independently and without a teacher.

It is also worth mentioning that, although English seems to be one of the most popular language studied in-person or online, most of the above-mentioned technological affordances allow other modern languages to be taught and studied as well.

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